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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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## GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and honorable members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 389, An Act Concerning Ranked-Choice Voting.

Ranked-choice voting is an innovative voting procedure which would enable voters to have their preferences fully considered when electing candidates. Each voter ranks as many candidates as they like, from first to last. The tabulation then proceeds in rounds: each round, the candidate with the least votes (initially first-place votes) is eliminated, and voters who voted for that candidate are reallocated to the next-place vote in their ranking.

This allows voters to avoid “strategic” voting (voting for a candidate that is not their first choice) and to indicate their true preferences when participating in their civic duty. It means that a first-place vote allocated to a candidate is not wasted if that candidate does not draw a significant level of support.

This bill presents a well-thought-out path forward for implementation of ranked-choice voting. It allows the parties to choose whether ranked-choice voting is appropriate for the presidential preference primary, allows municipalities to choose whether to use ranked-choice voting for their single-member elections, and specifies that ranked-choice voting be used in federal congressional elections. This set of policies avoids a potential constitutional issue that could imperil implementation. It also avoids modifying our Citizens Election Program.

Ranked-choice voting has been used successfully in a handful of municipalities around the country for decades, and in recent years the procedure has been implemented broadly and successfully in Maine and Alaska. In those jurisdictions, it appears that ranked-choice voting has promoted consensus and ensured outcomes that reflect the full will of the voters.

Thank you to the committee and to the legislators and advocates who have worked on this issue. It is exciting to see ranked-choice voting implemented around the country, and Connecticut’s time is now to begin work on this important reform.